789 /50 cont./
855 degree than in the progenitors themselves -- tender young
846 children unless they are counteracted by the force of the charms for each case or matter.

789 The practices and abstentions related to the death of rela-
753 tives are based similarly on the supposition that the decomposi-
761 tion of the body of the dead causes infections and stench in
793 all the relatives, producing in them sores, eruptions, decomposition, and similar things; for this reason they must abstain from contact with all others in order not to contaminate them, cannot prepare meals for them, etc.

489 In summation of the foregoing we can transcribe these words from the Enciclopedia Espasa: "Savage and barbarian societies, and in general always those that are ignorant of the causes of physical or psychic phenomena, man has attempted to oppose the nefarious influence of the spirits which he supposes surround him by means of a series of magic rites -- mimetic and oral...." To these words we must add that, as can be observed from some of the examples cited above, not only is the attempt made to counteract the evil influences of the spirits proper, but also other corporal, but mysterious, beings.

Chapter XIII

Do the Indians Practice Divination?

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109. The innate curiosity of all men. 110. Among the Indians, neither more nor less. 111. Invocation of the dead. 112. Omens. 113. The interpretation of dreams. 114. Casuality and causality. 115. The "just in case."

109. The innate curiosity of men, which is said to be the beginning of all knowledge, recognizes no barriers; and sometimes with leaden feet, with well thought out arguments and

/58 cont./

765 As a result of this they must withdraw from dealing with
753 others; they must not join in to eat other people's food nor offer to others food prepared for them, since they would make them sick, causing them to have stomach-aches, intestinal decomposition, and similar things. I even recall having heard them often attribute to this diarrhea and intestinal worms in children, who are weaker and of more exquisite sensitivity to feel evil influences and vibrations, to say it in one way, sympathetic.

Keep in mind that this infection is not due only nor principally to physical contact with the dead person, but to sympathetic or physio-psychological contact; so that, even at a distance and far away from the dead relative, this will influence equally all his kindred.

[302] In addition to the observances noted above, mourners shave their heads completely and paint themselves with annatto or achiote, but the women are left with a little lock of hair on top.

When one moon or more has passed, those affected by the asarakpué wash themselves, together with all of their implements and clothing, using verbasco lye. And thus they can return to common, everyday life.

[783] It would be too much to say that at present the Pemón Indians observe this with all rigor; against the natural protest of the piaches and the old people, the younger generations are losing these beliefs and customs.

800 Both practices, those of the couvade and those of the asarakpué, are quite similar to the Mosaic legal prescriptions concerning the impurity of parturient women and concerning those who touch corpses; thus it can be seen that in past centuries, when ethnology was still in diapers, there was an attempt to discover by means of these a close link between the Indians and the Jews.